

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

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FM AMEMBASSY ATHENS

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INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY NICOSIA

AMCONSUL ISTANBUL

USMISSION NATO

/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1621

USCINCEUR

USDOCOUTH NAPLES

USDOCOLAND SOUTHEAST

USNMR SHAPE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PLOS, TU, GR, PINT

SUBJECT: CARAMANLIS CONSULTS WITH OPPOSITION: PUBLIC CALM CONTINUES.

REF: ATHENS 7290 (NOTAL)

1. BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED: ALTHOUGH THE ADVENTURES OF SISMIK I AND THE STATUS OF GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS CONTINUE PROMINENTLY IN THE GREEK MEDIA, THE GENERAL PUBLIC MOOD REMAINS CALM. AS HE DID LAST WEEK, PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS AGAIN CALLED IN SEPARATELY OPPOSITION PARTY LEADERS GEORGE MAVROS (CENTER OF THE DEMOCRATIC UNION) AND ANDREAS PAPANDREOU (PASOK) TO BRIEF THEM ON THE CURRENT SITUATION. A GOG SPOKESMAN WAS CAREFUL TO POINT OUT THAT THE BRIEFINGS HAD BEEN PREARRANGED AND THERE WAS NO URGENCY SURROUNDING THEM.

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2. MAVROS STATED AFTER HIS MEETING WITH CARAMANLIS THAT

TURKEY WAS USING THE SISMIK I AFFAIR FOR DOMESTIC PURPOSES, TO DIVERT THE ATTENTION OF THE TURKISH PEOPLE FROM PRESSING INTERNAL PROBLEMS. HE CALLED THE TURKISH POLICY DANGEROUS AND SAID THE GOG WAS PLAYING WITH FIRE. PAPANDREOU, IN CONTRAST TO HIS FIERY, ANTI-GOVERNMENTAL SPEECH TEN DAYS AGO CRITICIZING THE GOG'S HANDLING OF THE PROBLEM (REFTEL), BACKTRACKED NOTICEABLY AND ISSUED A CALL FOR GREEK NATIONAL UNITY. THE GREEK PEOPLE, HE SAID, SHOULD FACE THE TURKISH PROVOCATIONS WITH "CALM AND DETERMINATION." HE NOTED TURKISH EFFORTS TO PUT IN DOUBT GREEK CONTINENTAL SHELF CLAIMS IN THE AEGEAN BUT, AS DOES THE GOG, CITED THE 1958 GENEVA CONVENTION AS ENSURING THE LEGITIMACY OF GREEK RIGHTS IN THE AREA.

3. THE MEDIA CONTINUES TO GIVE HEAVY PLAY TO DEVELOPMENTS IN GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS AND TO THE AEGEAN SITUATION. BASING THEIR STORIES ON A DAVID TONG ARTICLE IN THE GUARDIAN ABOUT SECRET GREEK-TURKISH TALKS, MANY NEWSPAPERS SUGGEST BILATERAL DISCUSSIONS ARE UNDERWAY TO DEVISE A SOLUTION ON THE SISMIK I ACCEPTABLE TO BOTH SIDES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SISMIK I IS REPORTED AS BEGINNING HER SEISMOGRAPHIC ACTIVITIES IN THE AEGEAN SEA TOMORROW (JULY 29). INTERWOVEN THROUGH MUCH OF THE REPORTING IS THE SUGGESTION THAT THE ATTEMPT ON ECEVIT'S LIFE IN NEW YORK WAS AN EFFORT TO "PROVOKE" A FURTHER DETERIORATION IN GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS, WITH LEFTIST TA NEA ALONE IN SUGGESTING THERE MIGHT BE CIA INVOLVEMENT. END UNCLASSIFIED.

4. BEGIN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE. COMMENT: PRIME MINISTER CARAMANLIS' INITIATIVE TO CALL IN THE TWO PRINCIPAL OPPOSITION LEADERS FOR CONSULTATIONS SERVES A TWIN PURPOSE. IT SERVES TO RESTRAIN OPPOSITION FIRE-EATERS AND IT PRESENTS A PUBLIC IMAGE OF NATIONAL SOLIDARITY AND CALM. IN FACT, ONLY COMMUNIST PARTY OF THE EXTERIOR LEADER, LEONIDAS KIRKOS, HAS OFFERED ANY RECENT PUBLIC CRITICISM -- AND THAT WAS BECAUSE HE ALSO HAD NOT BEEN INVITED BY THE PRIME MINISTER FOR CONSULTATIONS, NOT BECAUSE OF HOW THE GOG IS HANDLING THE PROBLEM. KUBISCH

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